A High Powered Committee was subsequently set up under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Finance and Company Affairs to assess the fiscal situation of States. This Committee discussed all these issues and recommended certain measures. These in turn, were considered at a meeting of all State Finance Ministers under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Finance and Company Affairs.

Subsequently, at a meeting of Chief Ministers under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister, the recommendations of the High Powered Group were placed to enable wider consultation to arrive at a consensual approach. The Government of India would be guided by the decisions taken in this meeting of the Chief Ministers.

Geethakrishnan Committee Report

*212. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the major recommendations of the Geethakrishnan Committee Report;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Committee had recommended for abolition of 42,000 posts in Government;

(c) if so, the number of posts abolished during the last three years, category-wise, department-wise and year-wise;

(d) the number of posts created/tenure extended during the same period, category-wise, department-wise and year-wise; and

(e) whether it is a fact that only lower category posts are targeted for abolition ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The Expenditure Reforms Commission has submitted in all 10 reports on rationalization of the functions, activities and structure covering 36 Ministries/Departments having a staff strength of about 8 lakhs and on four specific issues namely, Food subsidy, Fertilizer subsidy, autonomous institutions and optimizing staff strength. The recommendations of Expenditure Reforms Commmission are under various stages of implementation.

(b) to (e) The Commission identified about 42,000 posts for abolition. On further study, the Ministries agreed to the abolition of about 23,000 posts out of those identified by the Expenditure Reforms Commission. So far around 11,400 posts have been abolished. These consist of posts in all groups of Group As, B, C and D.

(d) the requisite information is not centrally maintained. The

functions of the Government are vast and posts are required to be created/tenure extended as and when necessary.

Banks in rural areas

†*213. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':

Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total number of Public Sector Banks in the rural areas of the country has declined from 35,389 in 1993 to 32,394 in 2002;

(b) if not, the facts thereof; and

(c) the estimated decline in the number of branches of these banks during the above period, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) The number of branches of public sectors banks in rural areas as on 31.3.1993 was 33264. As on 31.3.2002 the number was 32512. A reclassification of areas both rural and urban, was undertaken in 1996 as per the 1991 census population figures, as a result of which there was reclassification of areas, both rural and urban. Consequently, the number of rural branches was revised from 35389 to 33264. State and Bank group-wise number of rural branches of scheduled commercial banks as on 31.3.1993 and 2002 is given in Statement enclosed.

Statement

State and Bank-Group wise number of Rural Branches/Offices of Scheduled Commercial Banks in India (as on March 31, 1993 and 2002)

State/U.Ts.	Bank Group	1993	2002
1	2	3	4
Andaman & Nicobar	SBI and Associates	12	13
	Nationalised Banks	4	4
Andhra Pradesh	SBI and Associates	543	560
	Nationalised Banks	898	904
	Regional Rural Banks	932	898
	Indian Pvt. Banks	67	73

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.